

Energies of Transformation: *Practicing with the Power of the Divine Feminine*

Meditation Homework

Week One: November 9-15, 2010

This is the first “installment” of your homework: It is a basic meditation practice for the week. We’ll be doing a very simple meditation practice with AUM, which is the mantra of Tara. The simplicity belies the depth of the practice. In tantric mantra practice, the mantra is seen as the very form of the deity-energy. So, at the heart of this meditation is the recognition that by practicing with the mantra, you are directly taking in the energy of Tara. If you are used to meditating with a different mantra, you may find that at a certain point your usual mantra comes up. If that happens, don’t resist; let it happen. But always begin your meditation practice this week with AUM.

Tomorrow, I’ll be sending some contemplations, along with the instructions for the practice of offering our ‘veils’ into the transformative fire that we did in class.

Meditation Practice

1) Posture

Seated in a comfortable, upright posture, inhale and let the lower body become heavy and grounded.

Exhale, and let the body rise up from this grounded base, straight up through the crown of the head.

Inhale and let the chest lift and open.

Exhale, and allow the shoulder blades to release down the back.

2) Invocation

Begin by reading aloud this invocation to the Divine Feminine as the power of transformation. Or, if you prefer, you can use your own words. After a while, you will find your own words to the prayer, and you may even find that you want to offer different dualities each day. The more spontaneous and heartfelt all this is, the more powerful, but even doing the invocation and prayer mechanically is effective!

Oh power beyond all powers, lover and mother of the universe

You are the life within my life, the breath within my breath.

I invoke you as Tara, the liberator.

I offer you the obstructions, the karmic knots, the veils that hide my true Self,

I offer you everything that stands in the way of love and freedom.

I ask for your grace to awaken and transform me.

I ask to feel the depth of your love.

I ask to live as love.

(Here, ask for what you most deeply want or feel you need in this moment. You might voice a spiritual desire, or ask for help with some situation in your life. Don't hesitate to ask for anything. You're teaching yourself to ask for help from the Divine Feminine, and you need to know that she wants to give it! So let yourself ask.)

3) Meditation on AUM in the Heart

Find your heart center by placing your hand, palm down, over the breast-bone, and imagining a point in the very center of the body, underneath your palm.

Allow the breath to flow in with the thought "AUM" (Ah-oo-mm). Feel that the syllables are being offered into the heart, like raindrops falling into the center of the heart.

With the exhalation, let the breath flow out from the heart, having the feeling that the energy in the heart gently expands, as though a balloon were blowing up inside your chest. You may breathe out the mantra with the exhalation, or simply let the breath flow out naturally, whichever feels more comfortable.

After a few minutes, gently bring your attention towards the back of the heart, and let the breath and the mantra flow into the back heart. Have the feeling of taking rest in the heart.

Feel that as you breathe with the mantra AUM, you are taking the liberating love of the divine mother in the form of Tara into your being, and that with the exhalation, her energy expands through the body. So, each time the mantra drops into the heart, it brings divine mother energy with it, expanding the heart with the shakti.

As thoughts arise, note "Thought." Then, recognize that the thought is made of shakti, of energy, of consciousness. Let it dissolve with the exhalation.

Walking-Around Contemplation

- 1) From time to time, this week, as you move through the world, have the thought: "My heart is the heart of the Divine Mother."
- 2) From time to time during the day, stop. Tune into your breath. Remind yourself: "I am being breathed by the Shakti, the great mother energy of the universe. " Let this become a natural recognition. Notice how it feels to let yourself be breathed. Hesitation, resistance, or fear may come up. If so, offer them to the Shakti.
- 3) Try this: At some point during the day, while you are talking to a friend, or in a phone conversation, or in a meeting, ask the Goddess to speak through you. Without judging, notice how it feels to speak your next few words or sentences.